



**MINUTES OF THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF CIVIC OFFICERS
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
HELD FRIDAY 31 MARCH 2017
at Makeney Hall, Belper, Derbyshire**

Present: 90 Members of the Association

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from:

Bryan Magan, Alex Kowalczyk, Sandra Robinson, Katie Neve, Jackie Cansick,
Alasdair Ross, Fiona Garth

2. MINUTES OF THE AGM 2016

- 2.1 The minutes of the Association's AGM held on Wednesday 17 March 2017 at the offices of Southwark Council, Tooley Street, London, SE1 2QH were approved as a true record.

3. CHAIR'S REPORT

- 3.1 The Chair presented his Report which had been previously circulated to those present and which would be displayed on the Association's website, www.naco.uk.com.
- 3.2 There were no questions other than a request for the Constitution to be put on the web site and this was agreed.
- 3.3 The meeting agreed to note the Chair's report.

4. SECRETARY'S REPORT

- 4.1 The Secretary's report had been circulated to those present and would be displayed on the Association's website after the AGM.
- 4.2 The Secretary said that she was pleased to say that since she had written her report membership had grown to 523.

- 4.3 There were no questions and the meeting agreed to note the Secretary's Report

5. TREASURER'S REPORT

- 5.1 The Association's Balance Sheet for the accounting year ending 31 December 2016 had been circulated to those present. A note would be placed on the website stating that if other members wished to view this they could contact the Secretary.
- 5.2 The Accounts showed that the Association was financially stable despite having had some expenses in connection with the continuing development of the website
- 5.3 It was anticipated that the Training Event would make a profit which would ensure that the Association would continue to be financially stable.

6. CO-OPTION OF MEMBERS TO THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE 2016-17

- 6.1 There had been no co-option of members to the Executive Committee during 2016-17

7. AMENDMENTS TO THE CONSTITUTION 2016-17

- 7.1 The Chairman reported that there had been no changes to the Constitution during the 2016-2017 year

8. MEMBERSHIP FEE 2017-18

- 8.1 It was proposed by the Chair, and seconded by the Marsha Whiteway, that the Membership Fee for the ensuing year should again be nil.
- 8.2 The proposal was agreed unanimously

9. ELECTION OF EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE 2017-2018

- 9.1 The following 24 nominations were received: -

Gillian Allwright	Retired Civic Officer
Jim Babbington	Royal Borough of Kensington & Chelsea
Malcolm Bartlett	Retired Civic Services Manager
Jacqui Brazil	London Borough of Southwark
Jackie Cansick	Stevenage Borough Council
Christine Christensen	Ipswich Borough Council
Anita Cund	City of Wolverhampton Council
Sue Dunkley	Erewash Borough Council
Fiona Garth	Lewes Town Council
Penny Harrison	Retired Civic Officer
Mike Hollingworth	Charnwood Borough Council
Margaret Humphrey	London Borough of Camden
Alexandra Kowalczyk	Former Civic Officer
Bryan Magan	Warrington Borough Council
Hannah Marr	Crewe Town Council

Paul Millward	Nottingham City Council
Phil O'Brien	Erewash Borough Council
Alison Orde	St Albans City & District Council
Clare Richardson	North Kesteven District Council
Sandra Robinson	Belfast City Council
Pat Seager	Epping Forest District Council
Irene Webster	Retired Civic Officer
Marsha Whiteway	Canterbury City Council
Beverley Wilson	Retired Clerk to the Lieutenancy

9.2 The Chair proposed that the nominations be approved *en masse* and this was agreed.

9.3 The meeting agreed that the 24 nominations should be appointed as members of the Executive Committee 2017-18.

10. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

10.1 There were no items of business received within the prescribed 14 day period of notice.

Penny Harrison
Secretary
NACO
Tel: 01553 760961
Email: secretary@naco.uk.com
April 2016

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF CIVIC OFFICERS ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 31 March 2017

Chair's Report

Introduction

It's almost 25 years ago that I started to think about creating a network of civic officers, mainly across the 'big cities'. This thought came from necessity – I had no idea whether what I was doing in Nottingham was any good nor any information as to what anyone else was doing across the country, probably in the wake of the same problems and opportunities that I was facing. I relished the opportunity of visiting other Lord Mayors' offices and meeting people who were clearly more talented and innovative than me. As I've often said, all my best ideas were someone else's first. I visited 7-8 cities that also had Lord Mayors and there clearly was an appetite from the Lord Mayor's Secretaries I had visited to meet each other, probably as they weren't getting much back from me by way of innovation or knowledge.

It wasn't until 1993 that a group of us met in Nottingham and formed the Civic Secretaries Group. This Group steadily grew, mainly through other councils contacting me and asking to join. The Civic Secretaries Group helped me write my first edition of Civic Ceremonial and we thought it a good, if not unfeasible, idea to hold a National Conference, open to all councils.

This we did in 1997 at The Albert Hall in Nottingham and at that conference I, probably for the lack of anything useful to say, proposed we create a National Civic Officers' Association. Two years later, at the second Civic Officers' Conference, NACO was born and twenty years later, we meet again in the East Midlands. Much has changed in those 20 years in civic office, but much I also hope NACO has had an influence on for the better. Money and staffing resources are unrecognisable from 1997 but I still feel that the Civic Head's Office has an important and central role to play in a council. It's our job to shape that role and to engage with the whole council to enable that to happen.



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I am, therefore, pleased to set out my report for the 18th Annual General Meeting of the National Association of Civic Officers. It has been a year of slow but continuous achievement for the Association, most notably in the levels of our membership and the influence and respect we have gained with some Government departments and other significant bodies. The Association's views have continued to shape the civic work of local authorities throughout the country; our newsletters, so I'm told, are appreciated by councils; our website is now professionally produced and developed; we have continued to encourage a series of regional training events across the country; continued to attract high class and innovative entries to the Civic Office of the Year Award and organised this National Conference, all whilst maintaining a stable, increasing and committed membership with the annual membership fee remaining £0! This is not an easy thing to achieve, but I have always held the view that I am more interested in the level of our influence, knowledge and support for our members than I am in bank balances and 'image'.

Whilst attendance at Executive meetings has been less than in previous years I should note we have had a very committed executive this year and some excellent work has been undertaken. I can honestly say that if someone offers to do a job it does get done!

Executive Committee

The Executive Committee has met on three occasions since the 2016 AGM (17th March 2016) with these meetings being held in Epping (7th July 2016), Nottingham (11th October 2016) and Belper (24th January 2017). The minutes of these meetings are available on the NACO website (www.naco.uk.com). However, should any member wish for a 'hard copy' to be sent to them they can do so by contacting the Secretary, Penny Harrison e-mail secretary@naco.uk.com.

Following the appointment of the Executive Committee at the 2016 AGM held in Southwark on 17th March 2016, the following people were appointed to the named officer posts at the meeting on 7th July 2016:

Chair – Paul Millward;
Vice-Chair – Jim Babbington;
Secretary – Penny Harrison;
Treasurer – Gillian Allwright
Press Officer – Jim Babbington.
Training Officer – Christine Christensen

I am also pleased to report that one of our longest standing executive members, Charles Talbot, was awarded a M.B.E for services to the community in Kidderminster, in the 2017 New Year honours list.

Co-option to the Executive Committee 2016/17

There were no co-options to the Executive Committee in 2016/17.



The Executive Committee is still under-represented in some areas and especially from County Councils, Wales and Scotland. We are very keen to widen representation on the Executive Committee and would be particularly pleased to receive nominations from these areas.

Changes to the constitution 2016/17

The constitution allows for the Executive Committee to change the constitution, subject to that change being ratified or rejected by the membership at the next Annual or Extraordinary meeting. There have been no changes to the constitution in 2016/17.

Business Plan

The Association's business plan is, sadly, out of date and the new Executive will need to look at this as a matter of urgency at its meeting in June 2017.

Membership Fee

The Executive Committee is recommending, later in the agenda, that the membership fee should remain, once again, at £0. This fee has been held for many years now. Nevertheless, as the Accounts will show, the finances of the Association remain healthy.

The administration costs of the Association are a little higher than in previous years, notably from the need to set up and develop the website. All of the expenditure incurred by the Association is agreed, in advance, by the Executive and no-one gains financially from being a member of the Executive or when undertaking any role or tasks. The Association continues to offer financial guarantees to councils hosting certain training packages.

The Constitution requires us to have a positive bank balance at the year end.

AGM and Training Day 2016

A large number of delegates attended the 2016 AGM and Training Day, held at the London Borough of Southwark and hosted by Michael Cleere. The workshops were largely well received and 'customer feedback' was extremely pleasing. The results of the Survey Monkey were carefully considered by the Executive Committee and we do genuinely try to incorporate members' wishes in our arrangements. Not everything suggested is possible and sometimes we disagree with comments but we always take them into account.

The Executive Committee had agreed jointly to promote the conference between the Association and Southwark Council with both parties eligible for 50% of the profits of the conference whilst NACO agreed to cover any losses. As in previous years, this event made a profit for both organisations.

London Bridge



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The Association's suggested protocol for the Death of a senior national figure has been enthusiastically received by many councils and now forms the bedrock of many Authorities' arrangements for such occasions. This work has been led by Jim Babbington of the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea and he is shortly to release the next iteration of the protocol which will be available to all members in due course. Our arrangements have also been considered by DCLG and the Cabinet Office.

Civic Office of the Year

The Association has been pleased to continue the Civic Office of the Year Awards and welcomes the continued support of Vaughton's and LogoCloth. The Association remains committed to the exchange of best practice and we consider that the awards are an excellent way not only to highlight the work of Civic Offices but also to spread good practice. It was heartening to see the continuation of the high quality entries we come to expect this year and it is clear to me that there is a lot of unsung work and pride in Civic offices throughout the country.

My thanks to Vaughton's and Logocloth for their continued support and the judges for this year's awards. My thanks also to Christine Christensen and Malcolm Bartlett who co-ordinate the awards.

Website

The website was redesigned in 2015/16 and has continued, in my view, to improve steadily. The Executive Committee is pleased to announce that the new Message Board is now fully functional and is easy to use. Unlike our previous attempts at a Message Board, the latest version allows for all members to pose a question, for it to be 'moderated' quickly before publishing, and for information to be shared between members in an efficient manner. Please use it and tell us what you think of it.

The feedback we have received about the new website has been positive. We know we still have to make improvements in its use but we believe that we are making progress.

Communication with members

Two steps forward, one step back... Having amassed a very useful e-mail database of members we sought to communicate with you via a regular newsletter, using MailChimp. This was, we thought, very successful but as time went by we realised that some council servers were blocking our missives as spam. Nothing that Jim Babbington writes could ever be thought of as anything as downmarket as Spam! We are working on a solution to ensure you all get our e-mails.



Many of you email or ring me for advice or my views and I am more than happy to help where I can. Please bear with me if I don't reply quickly as my boss, quite rightly, seems to think I am employed to do other things! Pester me, however, if I fail to reply completely!

Training

The Association has always put much more emphasis on the training of its members and this year we have been successful in holding NACO events in many regions throughout the UK. There still remains a lot of work to do in this area and I am, as ever, grateful to Christine Christensen of Ipswich Borough Council who continues to encourage these regional events and to find new training partners. I should remind members that NACO offers a financial loss guarantee for events (see Christine for details) and these events virtually always make a profit for the host organisation whilst also raising the profile of the Civic office in the eyes of its own council.

There are seven new seminars being held in 2017, details of which are in your delegate pack or available via the website.

We are also pleased to be working with Duncan Bhaskaran Brown, "The Civic Coach" who is speaking at this week's conference.

We are, very hopefully, looking to help stage a NACO event for Scottish Authorities in October and we are much encouraged and pleased by this potential development. We recognise the different history and working practises of Scottish councils but we also share many of the same problems.

Thanks

I would like to thank all the members of the Executive Committee who helped during the past year. It's been a difficult year for many of the Executive, some for personal reasons, some from work, myself included. Even in the face of these challenges, people continue to contribute, keep their promises and do things for the Association they really have no reason to do! But, that's Civic Officers, past and present, for you. When the film of the Story of NACO is made my part (probably played, I think, by Hugh Laurie in best 'Night Manager' mode) will be confined to the start and the end and you will see instead just how much is done by the executive members.

For this year's conference, we all owe a debt of thanks to Phil O'Brien, who has been our 'logistics' guru and, of course, to Penny Harrison for leading the administrative work with her band of helpers.

Finally, the principal office holders of the Association continue to be of immense support to me and I am most grateful to them.

Paul Millward
Chair
National Association of Civic Officers
Nottingham
March 2017



NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF CIVIC OFFICERS ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 31 March 2017

Secretary's Report

It has been a pleasure for me over the past 12 months to keep in touch with so many members of NACO around the country and many of you now, I feel, are old friends, some of whom I have never met or only exchanged the briefest of greetings at NACO Training Events.

What is really pleasing is that we now have a membership of 513. This compares very favourably with last year's figure of 445. I have in recent weeks been able to go through the list and delete many members who appear to have moved away from Civic Office. Since the last AGM about 100 people have asked to join.

One thing that works well is the online membership form and completion of this means that I receive details of new members usually within minutes of the form being completed. On most occasions, I am able to welcome new members the day they apply to join.

One thing that has not worked is sending out our newsletters and other information to members via the mail chimp system. A great many authorities block the delivery of emails via this system and even if they are unblocked this does not work for any future emails. Because of this we decide to revert to the more conventional method of sending out information and although it is much more time consuming it is much more reliable.

I am pleased that we have started our Situations Vacant page on the website as this is another service we are able to offer members and I would like to remind you that if you have a vacancy for civic staff please let me know and I will include this on the page.

I would urge any member who would like to become more involved in the running of NACO to consider being a member of the Executive. We really are a friendly bunch of people but we do need more people who are still employed in Civic Office as quite a few of us are now retired and although we can give more time that way we are not at the forefront of civic life any longer.

Penny Harrison
Secretary
NACO
March 2017



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NACO AUDITED ACCOUNTS FOR 2016-2017

WOULD MEMBERS WISHING TO SEE A COPY OF THE AUDITED ACCOUNTS PLEASE
CONTACT THE SECRETARY AT secretary@naco.uk.com